Quesnell Timber Supply Area
Summary of Public Input

B.C. Ministry of Forests

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Quesnel Timber Supply Area, Summary of Public Input

Quesnel Timber Supply Area

Timber Supply Review

Summary of Public Input

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This is a summary of the public input that has been received on the Timber Supply Review in the Quesnel Timber Supply Area. This summary does not assess the feasibility or validity of the input or whether it relates to the clearly defined mandate of the chief forester in the allowable annual cut determination.

Background

As part of the review of timber supply in the Quesnel Timber Supply Area, the British Columbia Forest Service distributed a *Discussion Paper* and two technical reports—the *Timber Supply Analysis* and the *Socio-Economic Analysis*. The public was encouraged to review and comment on the accuracy of the information in these documents and to provide additional information. This report summarizes the input received during the 90-day review period. This information was provided to the chief forester for his consideration when he reviewed the allowable annual cut for the Quesnel Timber Supply Area.

The first section of this summary outlines the public review process implemented by the Forest Service, and describes the types of public input received. The second section summarizes the public input in sufficient detail to indicate the range of input received. The original submissions (with personal identifiers removed in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*) can be reviewed at the Quesnel Forest District office.

Public Review Process and Response

Quesnel District Staff actively solicited public input on the Timber Supply Review in the Quesnel Timber Supply Area through the following actions:

- direct mail-out of the three documents to over 80 organizations, businesses and interested individuals within the Quesnel Timber Supply Area or adjacent timber supply areas. The *Discussion Paper* included a response form which readers were encouraged to complete and return to the district manager

- seven information sessions were held with representatives from the timber industry, labour, local governments and other interest groups (see Table 1)

- three open houses were advertised extensively through a direct mail-out

- radio interviews were provided

- newspaper articles were encouraged

As Table 1 shows, more than 117 people attended the information sessions and the open houses. The Quesnel Forest District also received one completed response form and nine written submissions (see Appendix 1). The Quesnel Timber Supply Association, which includes the major forest licence holders operating in the Quesnel Timber Supply Area, commissioned a consultant to conduct a parallel analysis utilizing similar basic assumptions to those used in the *Quesnel Timber Supply Analysis* (referred to as the 'technical critique' in this report).

Activities (No. of participants)	**Date**
Meetings with interest groups	
Lower Blackwater Local Resource Use Plan (15)	April 10, 1994
Quesnel Environmental Society (10)	May 17, 1994
Quesnel Timber Supply Association (12)	May 18, 1994 Jan. 13, 1995
Local government	
City of Quesnel (20)	June 13, 1994
Wells Improvement District (20)	June 28, 1994
First Nations (10)	

Red Bluff: councilors and Carrier Chilcotin Tribal council representative	June 16, 1905
Soda Creek: councilors	June 20, 1994
Alexandria Band: chief and Tsilhqot'n Tribal Council representative	July 21, 1994
Open Houses	
Quesnel (9)	May 10, 1995
Wells	April 25, 1995
Nazko (21)	April 27, 1995

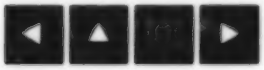
Table 1: Participation in public information sessions

Public Input

In this section, public input on the information presented in the three Timber Supply Review documents for the Quesnel Timber Supply Area is summarized under the following headings:

- timber supply analysis
- socio-economic analysis
- discussion paper

Public input on related government processes that may influence the timber supply in the Quesnel Timber Supply Area in the future is summarized at the end of this section.



Timber Supply Analysis

Technical critique

The Quesnel Timber Supply Association's technical critique provides substantial input on the Timber Supply Review process. The industry association indicates that their critique generally agrees and produces similar results to the Ministry of Forests analysis. However, they do not support the current timber supply review process because its centralized nature reduces understanding of local forest management challenges, solutions and opportunities.

The association expresses concern regarding the definition of current management used in the Forest Service analysis. Their critique incorporates the following changes:

- the western caribou deferral area was added back into the land base after 2008 based on the original Timber Supply Area Steering Committee agreement
- the 10 percent area reduction for stands in the Special Sale Area supply block used in the Forest Service analysis was not applied due to the finalization of the Dragon Provincial Forest boundary
- more immature pine types were included in the Association analysis net land base
- the minimum green-up height was revised to 2.5 meters top height based on the Cariboo Region Harvesting Guidelines.
- backlog not satisfactorily restocked areas were subjected to unmanaged stand yield projections as these areas will regenerate naturally
- old-growth constraints were applied to the total forested land base to model old forest requirements.

The Association's analysis indicates that with these above changes, the coniferous annual allowable cut can be maintained for 70 years as described in the Forest Service base case analysis. The harvest level is then predicted to fall to a long-term timber supply level of 2,220,340 cubic metres compared to 1,955,500 cubic metres in the Forest Service base case analysis.

They also suggest that in future:

- management zones should be created in a manner which accurately describes current management.

Other Public Input

- **Forest Ecosystems**

The Quesnel River Watershed Alliance suggests that the timber supply analysis does not incorporate an understanding of the interconnected and interdependent characteristics of forest ecosystems. The analysis results do not predict risks to conservation values. They suggest an approach that ensures that human community values are maintained and determines how forests are able to support those values.

One individual submission supports this view and specifies that the influence of changes in soil quality, micro-climate, global climate, biodiversity and hydrology are key areas of uncertainty in predicting future forest growth. Another person indicates that extended rotations or increased deferrals of harvest are beneficial to biodiversity conservation.

- **Wildlife habitat**

The Quesnel River Watershed Alliance states that the current areas of wildlife habitat excluded in the timber supply analysis are not credible because they are positioned to include inoperable and non-merchantable forest types and are based on out dated wildlife data. Their input also suggests that populations of sensitive wildlife species are threatened because of shifts from older, more diverse forests to younger simpler plantations and the impacts of other human activities.

- **Problem forest types**

C&C Wood Products Ltd. suggests that proper management after initial harvest of sites which are currently classed as problem forest types would effectively double future yields as compared to the present volumes found on these sites. They base this conclusion on harvesting experience in these stands since 1986.

- **Roads, landings and skid trails**

One individual indicates that the land base reduction for roads and landings was underestimated by a factor of three or four times.

- **Site productivity loss**

Concern was expressed that future reduction in site productivity caused by soil compaction and pollution was not adequately recognized in the analysis.

- **Utilization standards**

The C & C Wood Products' submission states that utilization standards should be the same on all

tenures. Their company standards were suggested to be the best alternative. The submission suggests that implementation of these standards could increase the volume recovered from each hectare harvested.

Socio-Economic Analysis

◄ TOC ►

Industry review

• The Quesnel Timber Supply Association provided a review of the *Socio-Economic Analysis* which states that the economic contribution of the forest sector is dramatically underestimated. Their input included the following specific issues:

• the use of person years as a measure of employment does not adequately recognize the number of workers or families which depend on forestry jobs and thereby underestimates the real levels of forest industry employment.

• the benefits and taxes generated by the forest industry are not considered.

• disagreement with the inclusion of public sector jobs, unemployment insurance, transfer payments and income assistance as "basic sector" employment as they are not independent of levels of activity within the TSA. A change in definition, as suggested by the industry group, would significantly raise the contribution of forestry to the basic sector.

• concern that wood processing facility "thresholds" are not expressly addressed.

• future inclusion of areas temporarily deferred from harvest for mule deer will have an upward effect on future employment levels.

• emphasized the importance of considering the effects of increased stumpage levels after May 1994 on revenues to the crown.

• concern that increased wilderness and tourism opportunities associated with lower timber harvest scenarios may be influenced by local population decline associated with lower forestry activity.

• concern that the degree to which signs of community and individual stress will manifest themselves is not "impossible to determine" as stated in the *Socio-Economic Analysis*. They suggest that scenario one would result in no impact until year 70, scenario two would have measurable increased stress impacts and scenario three would have no impact or may decrease individual and community stress due to increased employment opportunities.

- **Community and employment impacts**

C&C Wood Products Ltd. indicated that the employment coefficients used do not adequately reflect the employment created in the value-added industry. They estimate the value-added sector employs twice the number of people per unit of timber harvested and stressed the importance of maintaining the component of the AAC which supports this sector.

The Quesnel River Watershed Alliance is critical of the *Socio-Economic Analysis* methodology as it relies too heavily on the relationship between the number of trees harvested and the number of jobs created. They advocate a connection between economic success and healthy ecosystems.

The Cariboo-Chilcotin Wildcraft sector input stresses the importance of the wildcraft resource as an opportunity to improve the economic diversification of local communities.

- **Environmental impacts**

Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks input suggests that impacts to fish and wildlife are not treated thoroughly in the *Socio-Economic Analysis* and that emphasis placed on economic values associated with timber resources versus fish and wildlife resources is very uneven.

One individual highlights the comment in the *Socio-Economic Analysis* which states that movement of the accessible forest into younger age classes will have negative consequences for some wildlife species and for biodiversity conservation, and some positive impact on early seral dependent species such as moose. They also note that the increased road access associated with harvesting would have negative impacts for many wildlife species and sensitive habitats.

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Discussion Paper

Several issues raised in the *Discussion Paper* prompted public input.

- **Current management**

The Quesnel River Watershed Alliance states that changes to existing forests such as conversion to young age classes, simplification of diverse forests to plantations, creation of small isolated patches and damage due to landslides have put conservation values at risk.

One person observes that monocultures in European forests have an increased forest health risk.

- **Maintaining old forests**

The Quesnel Environmental Society supports the allocation of substantial old growth forests for non-timber resource values and not the harvesting of environmentally sensitive areas. They endorse management practices which protect biodiversity, forest soils and less obvious organisms.

- **Deciduous partition**

Input from one individual indicates that deciduous forests should not be converted to conifer forests after harvest due to their importance to wildlife, particularly cavity nesting birds.

- **Wildcraft**

Substantial input was received from the Cariboo-Chilcotin Wildcraft sector outlining the significance of this resource to all segments of local communities. The importance of inventory and regulation of this resource was stressed to ensure that wildcraft resource management is integrated with uses by other tenure holders and that specific sensitive areas are protected. Their input points out that wildcraft resources, of different types, are found through all stages of a forest's life cycle. They also note that first nations communities are typically more dependent on wildcraft resources than non-aboriginal groups.

They indicate that management for wildcraft values would require some changes to current management practices and would be aided by the development of a wildcraft tenure system.

- **Pulpwood harvesting**

The Quesnel Environmental Society and C&C Wood Products Ltd. concur that no timber should be harvested under pulpwood agreements in the timber supply area.

The Quesnel Environmental Society suggests that more employment is generated through allocation of

wood supply to major licensees and the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program than through harvesting for pulpwood.

C&C Wood Products Ltd. states that solid wood fibre which is of adequate size and the quality for the manufacture of value-added forest products, should never be harvested for use as pulp or medium density fibreboard.

- **Allowable annual cut adjustment**

Several suggestions were provided on adjustment of the allowable annual cut. This input varies from a suggestion that the harvest levels from problem forest types should be increased, to support for immediate reductions, either to the long-term sustainable level or by as much as 30 per cent. The input which recommends lowering the allowable annual cut cites the uncertainty regarding future site productivity, cumulative impacts on ecosystems and impacts of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land Use Plan and the *Forest Practices Code* as reasons for a reduction.

The results of the technical critique indicate that the current coniferous allowable annual cut could be maintained for 70 years followed by a 2 per cent decline to a long-term timber supply level of 2,220,340 cubic metres per year for 250 years.

A statement from C&C Wood Products Ltd. indicates the Forest Service analysis presents a clear and concise picture of the annual rate of timber harvest. However, they observed that the optimism felt by the industry regarding timber supply is not reflected in the background documents. They pointed out that existing problem forest type stands will remain unharvested 160 years from now if the current harvest level of 300,000 cubic metres per year is maintained as indicated in the technical critique. They suggest that the problem forest type component of the allowable annual cut should be increased in order to recover this volume before it is lost due to old age and to reflect the increased volumes these sites may produce.

The Quesnel Environmental Society emphasizes the inherent stability of the base case harvest forecast; however, they suggest that an alternative harvest flow option which in which harvest levels fall to the long term level after the second decade would encourage the industry to invest in value-added manufacturing.

The Wells-Barkerville Headwaters Alliance opposes any increase in the allowable annual cut to off-set job losses associated with forest industry automation. They feel an increase compromises the health of the environment. They also suggest that a greater emphasis be placed on value-added manufacturing as a means of increasing the ratio of jobs to harvested volume. They conclude that non-extractive uses require the allowable annual cut to be reduced immediately to the long-term harvest level or lower.

Protection of ecosystems and uncertainty of impacts from climatic change and soil degradation are the key reasons for the Quesnel River Watershed Alliance recommendation to lower the allowable annual cut to the long-term harvest level. They feel this is the maximum sustainable rate of harvest.

The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks suggests the use of management strategies developed in the late 1980's is misleading because of the effects of the Douglas fir beetle on critical mule deer winter ranges. Due to these types of factors and general overestimation of timber supply they suggest that a conservative allowable annual cut would benefit the management of all forest resources.

Two individual submissions indicate that the timber supply review estimates of long-term timber supply

level are too high because the timber supply model is limited in its ability to model complex forest ecosystems, in the underestimation of land base reductions due to roads and other factors which cause the timber supply to be overestimated.

One respondent highlights the high level of sensitivity of harvest level predictions to existing stand volume estimates as a cautionary point in determining an allowable annual cut.

Related processes

Comments on other ongoing government processes and issues in the Quesnel Timber Supply Area are summarized here to indicate perspectives on issues that may influence timber supply in the future.

- **Cariboo-Chilcotin Land Use Plan**

Several submissions suggest that it is imperative to consider the recent land use decisions made for the Cariboo-Chilcotin in the determination of an allowable annual cut.

One person comments that the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land Use Plan targets for other resources such as fish and wildlife appear to be flexible while timber targets are not.

The Quesnel River Watershed Alliance commented that the Cariboo-Chilcotin Land Use Plan has resulted in protection of one third of the Quesnel River watershed and this has not been recognized in the Timber Supply Review process. The alliance input also states that the land use plan does not adequately protect all ecosystems in the Quesnel River watershed.

- **Forest Practices Code**

Consideration of the implications of the *Forest Practices Code Act* is raised as an important issue in several of the submissions.

The Quesnel River Watershed Alliance indicates the *Forest Practices Code Act* will contribute to the conservation of habitats if it is promptly and properly implemented.

The Quesnel Timber Supply Association states that some of the regulations described in the *Forest Practices Code Act* have been modelled in a manner consistent with its intent during the Timber Supply Review.

- **Forest sector employment**

Several of the submissions propose that more employment should be created from each cubic meter of timber harvested. Suggestions to increase the ratio of jobs created ranged from using more labour intensive harvesting methods and increasing value-added manufacturing to restoring environmentally degraded lands. One submission also indicates the importance of guide-outfitting, trapping, mid- and backcountry recreation and tourism to a diversified economy

- **Other input**

The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks states they were not brought into the Timber Supply Review process and that decisions may have been made in the analysis that do not reflect their agency's resource management objectives.

Appendix 1

Submissions received by the Quesnel Forest District

Government agencies
Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Fish and Wildlife Branch, Cariboo Region.

Industry
Quesnel Timber Supply Association
C&C Wood Products Ltd.

Interest groups
Quesnel Environmental Society
Cariboo-Chilcotin Wildcraft Sector
Wells-Barkerville Headwaters Alliance
Quesnel River Watershed Alliance

Individuals
Three submissions